



## **As Prepared for Delivery - Remarks of ODNI General Counsel Robert Litt at American University Washington College of Law Freedom of Information Day Celebration**

---

March 18, 2014

Thank you, Dan, for that generous introduction, and for inviting me to speak here today.

As you know, this is "Sunshine Week," a national initiative to promote dialogue about the importance of open government and freedom of information. Public knowledge about the activities of government is essential to a free and democratic society, and so on his first full day in office President Obama, who has noted our "profound national commitment to ensuring an open government," called upon the entire government to comply with both the letter and the spirit of the Freedom of Information Act. Today I would like to talk to you about the challenges of reconciling that commitment with the secrecy necessary to conduct effective intelligence operations in defense of our national interests.

You may have noticed that the issue of transparency of intelligence activities has been in the news a lot lately. I want to make very clear that Edward Snowden's criminal leaks have seriously damaged our national security. The articles that have appeared have compromised specific and lawful intelligence collection capabilities, and we know that our enemies are taking note of these disclosures. Only time will tell the extent of the damage, and even then, we may never know what information has escaped us because these articles have helped our adversaries evade our surveillance.

...

[Download the Full Text of Mr. Litt's As Prepared Remarks](#)